

Hamburg meet: Third World needs A-power

Last week in Hamburg, West Germany more than 3,000 representatives from all over the world met to discuss nuclear energy development. The central theme of the Congress, sponsored by Foratom, the European Community nuclear organization, was development of nuclear technology as the key to Third World industrialization and stability.

What made this conference, titled "Nuclear Power-Option for the World," especially significant was its strong affirmation of the urgency of nuclear development despite the Harrisburg Three Mile Island incident with its attendant hysteria, and heavy antinuclear pressure from U.S. and British attendees at the meetings.

Following the opening plenum keynote delivered by West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, presentations included one by a leader of the West German nuclear manufacturer KWU on "Nuclear technology transfer—spectrum for the developing countries," followed by detailed presentations from the Italian, Pakistani and Brazilian nuclear agencies on the same issue. The Pakistani representative blasted the Carter Administration's nuclear nonproliferation policy. An equally firm address was given by the head of the Soviet fusion program, Academician E.P. Velikhov. Velikhov, who has made repeated overtures and proposals to the U.S., Europe and Japan for an international fusion effort to realize this imminently feasible open-ended energy source, emphasized the importance of the fusion-fission hybrid.

Sharply contrasting the behavior of U.S. and British nuclear industry spokesmen present, French and West German spokesmen laid out a clear perspective for expanded nuclear development internationally. Michael Pecquer, administrator of the French Atomic Energy Agency, CEA, underscored that government's recent positive response to the lag in the Iranian oil supply. He stressed that France will build five new nuclear reactors yearly as part of its stepped up domestic program through 1985. He denounced so-called soft energy technologies—solar, biomass, wind—as "ridiculous" for serving France's industrial development plans. France is, together with West Germany, the leading force behind using the European Monetary System as the launching base for development of massive industrial technology development projects in key developing sector countries. Nuclear power will play a central role in this grand design.

He also reaffirmed France's firm opposition to Carter Administration policy on the fast breeder

reactor, the next generation of nuclear technology and a field in which France is the most advanced technologically. He concluded by stating that Harrisburg "proves that nuclear energy is safe: The worst conceivable accident did not produce one single injury. The implementation of the 'green strategy' [environmentalist demand to end nuclear energy] could only be done in an authoritarian state."

Support for nuclear development

A press release distributed jointly by the European Labor Party and the Fusion Energy Foundation on "Harrisburg Hoax—Sabotage Against the American System" together with West German ELP Chairman Helga Zepp-LaRouche's call, "Atomic Power or Nuclear War?", were the focus of much discussion among delegates, with British representatives lobbying intensively against the ELP's pronuclear approach. But the best indication of the effort to demoralize conference attendees was in the presentations by the editor of an influential Washington-based newsletter, *Energy Daily*, and Carl Walske, chairman of the U.S. nuclear industry association, Atomic Industrial Forum (AIF). *Energy Daily* publisher Llewellyn King declared flatly, "institutional barriers preclude the nuclear option in the USA ... nuclear power will have to be nationalized." King went on to predict an explosion in the Middle East, including Iranian-backed PLO terrorist attacks on Saudi oilfields.

Walske's organization, the most influential nuclear industry association, works closely with King and with the Heritage Foundation, a Washington-based British intelligence project which has advised the U.S. nuclear industry to "lay low" and avoid a pronuclear counter-offensive in the wake of Harrisburg. Walske told the Hamburg assembly, saying, "In the U.S., we are now entering a somewhat turbulent period during which we shall be considering the lessons from Three Mile Island ... There will remain the possibility of accidents which can kill thousands of people." Walske also cautioned the European audience, "There is always a temptation to declare that other peoples' accidents could not happen to us. .. This is foolish"—a stab at French and German spokesmen who have stressed this point in the wake of Harrisburg. Walske, whose own organization has capitulated politically on every major Carter Administration offensive against nuclear development, predicted "two to three more years of near zero orders for nuclear plants."

—William Engdahl

'No industrial nation can give up nuclear power'

The following excerpts are from a speech given by West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt at the Hamburg meeting of the European Nuclear Conference on May 7th.

I remind you that the world's population is growing unceasingly. When I went to school in this city in 1925, we learned that there were 2 billion people in the world. Toward the end of this century, 75 years later, there will be nearly 6 billion, three times as many. Industrialization, especially in the Third World, is, thank God, increasing—and that means our energy requirements are increasing.

In this country, we are trying to obtain a situation in which one percent growth is connected with less than one percent additional energy consumption by means of conservation. In the developing countries, which are, primarily, in the process of building up their industrialization, such a favorable relationship—one percent growth of GNP with less than one percent growth in energy consumption—cannot be achieved.

Our German fate, as an exporting country, is connected extremely closely to the fate of the world economy as a whole. It is in our interests, but it also corresponds to our responsibilities for the countries less well off, to do everything possible to assure that energy scarcity does not hinder or even prevent the continued growth of the economy....

There are developing countries, large and important developing countries, that only needed a tenth of their export earnings to pay for the oil they consumed in 1972. Today, they have to pay one-third of their export earnings to pay for imported oil. That difference between a tenth and a third or more is no longer at the disposal of the developing countries for development of agriculture, for the development of modern industry.

Experts calculate that world energy needs by the year 2000—that is not far away, that is precisely 20 years and 6 months,—will double from six and a half billion coal equivalent units to 13 billion. ... A worldwide distribution fight for energy can also lead to confrontation among the big powers, or, in other words, I want to state clearly that a sufficient energy supply has become one of the essential elements of maintaining peace in the world—a recognition which will generally be seen everywhere in a few years....

If one looks at the country which is the biggest consumer of energy, the United States, it would be necessary to consume an additional 90 million tons of oil per year to replace the energy already produced by nuclear energy—if you wanted to replace it, regardless

of the investments which would be necessary to make this possible.

This clearly means that no industrial country, neither in the West nor in the East, can afford ... to exclude the use of this additional energy source.

I am talking about nuclear energy which already plays an indispensable role quantitatively in the world economy, even though it is still only an extending, complementary role in energy supplies. I think that nuclear energy must play this role for the foreseeable future—for the rest of this century at least—in order to be able to cover the needs of the developing countries for energy transfers at good economic conditions....

Nuclear technology is not only important for immediately covering energy needs. It is, at the same time, the basis of modern industry with a large number of future-oriented jobs, and is an important element in technological progress for industry as a whole. Industrial countries with high wage-levels, for instance this country, with higher levels of social services, will only be able to keep pace in the world economic structural change if they continue technological and economic progress. They would otherwise—in any case, if they are democratically governed states—be in no position to increase their development aid. Even the Federal Republic will only be able to keep its position in this group of especially productive industrial nations, if we perfect nuclear technology.

The fear that, later on, a turn around away from nuclear energy would be impossible unless we turn away from it now does not appear, to me, to be very enlightening. A second such turn around would be impossible. The allegedly temporary character of such a step would very probably be a sad self-deception. The skilled workers, the technicians, the engineers and researchers would have to look for other work. And it is very probable that we would lose the option of peaceful use of nuclear energy for the future.

For this reason—but not only for this reason—no large industrial country in the world, neither West nor East, has ever decided for such a shutdown....

Therefore, I think it is necessary that the government is urging an international conference, beyond the present context of governmental interface on reactor security, be called. The East European states must, without a doubt, also participate, because they operate many nuclear power plants, have experience and know the dangers....

Many of the arguments against nuclear technology are actually arguments against the entirety of modern industrial society, which, in many ways, gives rise to deep reaching philosophical questions far beyond just this technology. ... But pessimism about civilization is not the order of the day; it is not the renunciation of new technologies but, rather, the promotion of better technology. ...